LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: FRANK M. GARDNER (Willesden Public Libraries)

No. 419

JULY, 1934

Contents

ANNOUNCEMENTS	٠			٠						Page	158
PRONOUNCEMENTS					•		•			Page	160
PRESIDENTIAL ADDI						d	٠			Page	162
A JUNIOR SPEAKS						ugh		٠	٠	Page	168
THE THIRTY-NINTH	AN	INL	JAL	MI	ET	ING		٠		Page	169
ON THE EDITOR'S	DES	K								Page	17
DIVISIONS										Page	17
NEW MEMBERS										Page	17
CORRESPONDENCE										Page	17

.W.10

D.

NG

e styla

W.10

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ballot for the Officers and Council for 1934-5 resulted as follows:

OFFICERS

President . . . W. E. HURFORD, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Vice-President . G. V. R. HAYWARD, Norwich.

Honorary Treasurer . A. R. HEWITT, Middle Temple Library.

Honorary Editor . F. M. GARDNER, Willesden.

Honorary Secretary . R. D. HILTON SMITH, Hendon.

COUNCIL

DIVISIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Eastern . . Miss S. JACKA, Ipswich.

Midland . . . Miss M. J. Rogers, Birmingham.

North-East . . E. Pearson, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

North-Western . B. A. Hopson, Liverpool.

South-Eastern . Miss E. GERARD, Worthing.

South Wales and Monmouth E. Sellick, Cardiff.

South-Western . H. SARGEANT, Portsmouth.

Yorkshire . . H. W. MARR, Sheffield.

London.—G. P. Jones, B.A., 570; Miss E. M. Exley, 550; F. Seymour Smith, 528; S. W. Martin, 465; W. C. Pugsley, 445; W. B. Stevenson. 419; A. T. Austing, 411; R. Cooper, 387; J. H. Davies, 381; W. A. Munford, 354. Not elected.—B. Oliph Smith, 348; T. I. M. Clulow, 347; W. E. Gibson, 190.

Non-London.—J. Revie, 474; V. Woods, 473; G. P. Jackson, 440; L. A. Burgess, 335. Not elected.—S. A. Firth, 321; Miss M. L. Coatsworth, 249; W. H. Phillips, 210.

The recent week-end conference of the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association at Margate will remain a pleasant memory for all those librarians and assistants who attended it. The papers were, without exception, interesting and practical, the discussions keen and informal, without any of the starchiness which is so apt to paralyse larger assemblies, 158

and the fact that nearly all the delegates were staying in one hotel was in itself enough to make success certain. The committee and secretary of the Branch are to be congratulated on their experiment, which it is to be hoped will be repeated. There is no doubt that the growing unwieldiness of the Annual Conference makes these regional meetings more and more desirable, and we can assure assistants that they will find support of them very well worth their while.

WS:

nour nson.

347;

140;

orth,

nties

mory

vere,

rmal,

olies,

We are asked by the staff of the Bermondsey Public Libraries to test opinion on the possibility of forming an inter-library football league in London, or at least of arranging a number of friendly games between library staffs in the coming season. Any persons interested are asked to communicate with Mr. Cecil A. Part, Bermondsey Central Library, Spa Road, S.E.16.

The Council has decided to introduce the competitive element into the paper to be read at one of next session's meetings, and contributions are invited for a paper on "County libraries in 1950," to be read at the May Meeting, 1935.

The paper should take no longer than an hour to read, and should be type-written if possible. It should be sent not later than 30th November, 1934, to Mr. W. C. Pugsley, Branch Library, High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford. This is a preliminary announcement. Further details will be announced in the next issue of The Library Assistant.

Several members have expressed a desire to form a party to visit the London Docks by one of the personally conducted tours of the Port of London Authority. Any members or friends wishing to join this party are asked to notify Mr. Pugsley (address above), not later than 7th July. The tour will take place on 18th July, 1934, from Tower Bridge at 2.30 p.m., and the fare will be 2s. 6d. per head.

The Council has appointed a special committee to make arrangements for social events at Chaucer House during the coming session. It is hoped that a programme will be drawn up for every Wednesday during the winter months from the date of the inaugural meeting until the end of March. Various library staffs will be asked to make themselves responsible for one such

gathering, and it is hoped, in this way, that the headquarters will become the natural rendezvous for all those who have an evening to spare. Further details will be published at a later date, and everyone is requested, by their attendance, to help in making these meetings a great success.

PRONOUNCEMENTS

THE Annual Report of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust is always an impressive document, and this year its contents are more impressive than usual. In the year under review, two most important achievements are recorded—the opening of the National Central Library, and the opening of Chaucer House, from which the Library Association . . . " is in a position to discharge an ever-widening range of public service."

The opening of these two buildings marks a stage in the Trustees' policy of furthering national voluntary co-operation, which is being furthered rapidly in other directions. Only one new Regional Bureau was established, the South-Eastern, but that was an important one, and more Bureaux are foreshadowed for the coming year. Union catalogues are progressing steadily, though one can quarrel with the statement that a union catalogue, once established, is not expensive to keep up. However, so long as union catalogues are regarded as a step towards a central cataloguing bureau, and not a substitute for it, they are well enough.

Grants to municipal libraries show a slight decrease, due to the fact that the number of systems eligible for grants is declining. It is to be hoped that when the present policy of grants is revised, favour will be shown, not to those backward systems which have never levied a reasonable rate, but to those which are doing the utmost they can to provide efficient service. It is no doubt true, as the report says, that " since the termination of the grant period, few authorities have reduced their expenditure on books and binding." But it is also true that grants have been made to authorities which could very well have increased their expenditure before the grant was made.

And where is all this leading? One can gain some idea of this from the cautious, but, to those who read between the lines, very pregnant paragraph on future policy. "There are those who feel that a truly national conception of this supremely important service will not be achieved until the State sets up a special Library Department with specific powers and duties far wider than

the rather narrow and mainly routine functions exercised by the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education." In other words, the shadow of nationalization, or the sunshine of nationalization, whichever way you like to look at it, is sweeping over the land. With this statement most young librarians will find themselves in entire agreement, though they may wonder at it finding a place in the report of a charitable body. Nationalization is a fact of the future, and the younger school of librarians finds less that is terrifying in the prospect than their older colleagues. The only question one asks is, How? By the slow building up of voluntary co-operation schemes? By gradual absorption by the Board of Education? By Macchiavellian skirmishings behind the scenes? Or by insistent recognition of the need, and propaganda for the fact, among librarians? A careful study of the report will give much food for thought to those who hope for the last.

ne

ir

an

ve

e-

he

ı a

of dly

he

re-

ly,

ab-

are ute

hat

hat

ose

ose

no

od,

it it

well

the

raph

tion

sets

than

F. M. G.

The sense of stalemate at the discussions following recent A.A.L. papers points to an obstacle which, though universal and plain, has had no effective diagnosis and treatment. The difficulty is not lessened by professional obscurantism. Behind our statistics (we have often sharply to remind ourselves) lie human beings. A label like borrower is applied to both washerwoman and the student, and many types and individuals as different as cups from candles. In the same way, statistics are cynically considered to form the index of their intellectual activity: whereas our statistical method is inadequate, comparative statistics are an impossibility, and the statistics themselves are misleading and difficult to assess. Personal work with readers, frowned upon by retrogressive authority as time-wasting, is really of great moment; but it must, one thinks, be based on good psychological method and the study of man as reader; of his classes and types, and the ever-recurrent patterns of those who are getting philosophy by their characteristic means. Half the problem, in fact, resolves itself into educating librarians in the uses of the library.

The other half of the problem is ungrateful. It is impossible for us to do anything but contribute our small drops of water on the stone of public and governmental opinion. The school-leaving age must be raised to sixteen, and later to seventeen in recommended instances. The reason is clear: a passionate and romantic interest in everything within their ken—and beyond it—seizes all adolescents in greater or less degree, and before that interest can be

fruitful they are bumped off into life. It is the end of their chance of culture—such is the paradox of its strength and snail-born delicateness. They become stale and disinherited, and the most golden opportunity of the library is lost.

AN EPIGRAM

On our colleague B-

Here walk the bones of B., whose gift is such That all our great is small, and little's much. To blow the dust off books his simple art:

Which dust, 'tis plain, has settled in his heart.

D. M.

"58.85"

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

W. E. HURFORD

RECENTLY read a leaderette, in which the writer stated that in the late spring and early summer there was a spate of presidential addresses before all sorts and conditions of societies and associations. He boldly asserted that it provided opportunities to get rid of a great deal of "hot air," combined with that not unrare virtue [sic] of interference in somebody else's business. In effect, the conclusion arrived at was, that it is ridiculously simple to detect the mote in the vision of the other person, simultaneously ignoring the beam which blinds one's own perspective. As to the correctness of these statements, well, I will leave that to your individual powers of reasoning. Nevertheless, it is only by public utterance of thought and opinion, providing that it is not inane, that logical conclusions are reached.

In a presidential address, the range of thought, to be germane to the subject, is of necessity limited, unless one wishes his flights of fancy to soar to the realms of scholarly and literary eminence. To-day, I wish to speak about the obvious and commonplace, in so far as our professional interests are concerned—Our Association. I say advisedly—obvious and commonplace—because some are so apt to forget its existence until they implore its aid, or exercise their wrathful condemnation when things do not appear to suit their individual temperament. Then they are wont to exclaim, "For what purpose does the Association exist?" I am well aware of the answer the facetious could make to this query—"God knows."

We are assembled here celebrating the thirty-ninth anniversary, a little premature perhaps, but by less than three weeks, the first meeting having been held on 3rd July, 1895. I think it may be assumed, with every confidence, that its founders never visualized, in its embryonic stage, the evolution to which we bear witness. Truly it is a heritage of which we can justly be proud, and our responsibility is to see that it is continued with that dignity and decorum which befits us professionally. To those of us who have the welfare of the Association in their keeping, perhaps these statements are unnecessary, but a reminder to our younger professional colleagues may be excused. I do hope that they occasionally read their professional journal thoroughly, for if they do, these remarks may not fall entirely on barren ground.

It cannot be denied, that in former years such an association, as a separate entity from the Senior Association, was a necessity, nor can it be denied that its existence as such was justified. Schools of thought in the nebulous period of librarianship were very divergent and very dogmatic, and that cohesion which we now enjoy was at a premium. Let us review the chief cause of this closer allegiance and change of spirit. To commence with, it must be admitted that there will always be more assistants than chiefs, so that in the course of a lifetime some of us must remain in subordinate positions. I think that this statement brooks no argument. The fortunes of life are very varied, but this should not create in us an antagonistic or rebellious spirit. As librarianship progressed, through civic authorities adopting the Acts, recruitment to chief administrative posts was a matter of course. Whence were the recruits obtained? Naturally from the ranks of assistants, and mostly from members of our own body, unless local influence was brought to bear, leading to the appointment of a totally untrained person. We are content with the knowledge that some very illustrious chiefs have, at one time or other, been members of our Association, and we are glad to pay homage to them. Contrariwise, it has been suggested that, in isolated cases, some desire to forget their former association with us. To me this is hardly conceivable, and one should dismiss it, in the absence of very reliable evidence, as an ugly rumour.

The term "Librarian," like that of "Commission Agent," was very elastic, and extremely wide in its application. It covered a multitude of deficiencies. In former days it was an obsession to talk about "professional status," then a chimerical term. We had little, if any, professional status. Of course the "intellectuals" used to prattle about "status" and "love of the profession"—

ure

ost,

RD

late

fore

rted

ined

iess.

etect

eam

tate-

ever-

that

the

ar to

bout

con-

ce-

d, or

their

pose

tious

mere lip service. Money was to them even less than a secondary consideration. To-day, I venture to assert, no self-respecting assistant would, in similar conditions, tolerate this kind of claptrap. The professional status which ultimately emerged was the outcome of the sound and sterling work of our immediate predecessors in office. Theirs was not lip service but work, which to them was arduous, beset with criticism—more often than not destructive—and achieved very largely at no little expense to themselves. That professional jealousy, which was more predominant than professional etiquette, has, one is glad to learn, faded away, and also, according to an eminent librarian, "The day of the martinet chief has gone."

During the early days of the present century, libraries were looked upon as repositories for fiction only. So far as the public services were concerned, we were merely tolerated as a necessary evil. Conditions of service were deplorable, and the remuneration not at all commensurate with the returns expected. Even now, with some authorities, staffs are not graded with those of other departments. Comparisons are odious, and I shall content myself by suggesting what may be one cause of this apparent unfairness. The results of library work are abstract. They do not bear the concrete results of other professional bodies. Authorities, therefore, are in some cases at a loss, when it comes to estimating the respective values in cash for work done. In these cases, unfortunately, they act as if the work of the department that causes them doubt is, without doubt, inferior.

For many years the Library Association and our Section have experienced an uphill fight, and recognition—though in some instances tardy—is rapidly materializing. Necessity created the desire for such an association. We have endeavoured to better our conditions both materially and mentally, and at the same time to seek to educate the public at large in the necessity for public libraries. The popular belief was that anybody could be a librarian, a belief which still exists in certain quarters. If you doubt this statement, let me refer you to the May issue of our contemporary, The Librarian. Therein it is stated that a "new librarian" has been appointed for the Farnborough Library. The person appointed is a retired schoolmaster sixty-three years old. It is stated that the County Librarian informed the Committee "that this was the right man for the appointment." Now I am not suggesting that the appointment at Farnborough can be considered as one of the "plums" of the profession, but it goes to prove my contention that fixed beliefs are hard to eradicate. Another glaring example, under a County Library administration, was one in which I 164

was concerned in my capacity as Hon. Secretary of my Division. A position for a chief was advertised at £150 per annum, and applications were invited from assistants with the necessary qualifications—a very commendable practice, and one which would naturally attract our younger colleagues. In due course a selection was made, but did a qualified candidate get the post? No! It was awarded to a person, probably not so intimate with literature as I hope was the case in my previous example. In brief, it was given to an insurance agent. Our protest was not made in time to have any desired effect, but it certainly had a definite bearing on future appointments. It was pointed out that untrained persons (even though well educated) are never appointed to the positions of Town Clerk, Borough Treasurer, or Borough Engineer, or to senior positions in these departments. We added that, logically, the same principle was expected to apply to library appointments as to these other departments of recognized standing.

era-

in

atus

k of

ork,

not

ves.

onal

an

pon

ned,

vere

urns

hose

f by

ts of

ther

vhen

hese

uses

nced

oidly

have

t the

ublic

elief

refer

tated

The

tated

right

nt at

, but

other

ich I

When irregular appointments are made it necessarily follows that the best interests of the public are not being served. Your Association stands for the organization of all engaged in public library work, and also seeks to safeguard authorities when making appointments. In the interests of public bodies, it even goes further, by assisting in the professional education of its members. One is glad to observe that more and more municipal authorities recognize these facts, and are acting accordingly. Our senior association is thoroughly alert and active in these matters, and has taken steps to investigate what it is pleased to term "backward areas." Your own Section has also inaugurated a "forward policy" which was the direct outcome of the Report on hours, etc., issued in 1931. A previous collation of statistics was issued in 1911. It was presented and adopted at the 16th Annual Meeting of our Association. That report did a great deal to ameliorate the conditions then existing. It is now out of print, but can be consulted in any library of note. The latest Report can be purchased at a cost of 15. 6d. to members, and I recommend it to any professional colleague who does not possess a copy.

Those of us who have taken more than a passing interest in our professional affairs need no reminder of the history of the amalgamation with that very virile body, The Library Association. It was a very perplexing problem, which bristled with doubts and fears. Since our fusion, some four years ago, it has been proved that the major portion of our fears were rather magnified. It must be a source of consolation to those officers responsible for the change over to witness the comparative smoothness with which their efforts have

been accomplished. I still have very vivid recollections of the consultations, and preambles, introductory to what was considered a very revolutionary move. I can assure you that theirs was not an enviable position.

Where do we stand now after these years of co-operation? We still have our separate entity, being subject to the Library Association (or, as I term it, the senior association) for matters of policy only. Whilst in the main we are a corporate body, there still exists a need for a separate section. This loomed very largely as an unsurmountable hurdle when the primary discussions on amalgamation were in progress. By a separate section, I mean that there is room for sectional meetings where any youthful member should have an outlet for the expression of his or her opinion. What I have in mind is a junior section for the more youthful element, where they can gain experience before taking their rightful place in the larger assemblies. After all, they must gain experience somewhere, and what better medium could they enjoy than this, untrammelled by the presence of their more experienced colleagues, unless they so desire it. In my Division chiefs are always welcome; in fact, they are invited, but then we know that they are considerate, understanding, and able to appreciate the other fellow's point of view. It is not an unusual thing for them to address the meeting and join in its deliberations, and we are glad of their presence. You may think we are very fortunate-perhaps so.

Now a word as to membership! Those of us who have diligently read our current Annual Report will have observed that the Divisions are 86 per cent. full members of the Library Association. What about the other 14 per cent.? I recollect that circular letter of January last, issued to Transitional Members, caused some criticism. uncalled for? The minority think so, but what of the majority? Whilst agreeing that every effort should be made to get all transitional members to become full members, we must not forget that there are amongst them cases where pressure is misapplied. The instances I have in mind are where members are on the verge of retirement, and probably have done yeoman service in the cause of the Association. I should say that these might constitute 5 per cent.; still that leaves 9 per cent. to be accounted for. It is to this remaining number that I should like to make an appealthere are many with years of service before them. The question is pertinent. Is their present state—or attitude—a matter of principle, or is it a question of £ s. d.? If it is a matter of principle, then they are provided for, as the Library Association honours the bond given to us on amalgamation.

it be a purely financial state of affairs, then I have no argument. If that is the case, then I wish them a good increase in the immediate future, and I am sure then that their point of view will quickly change.

e

e

d

n

is

et

or

re

in

S,

255

ey

nd

ng

ad

tly

ons

out

ary

y?

nal

are

in

bly

that

ted

ıl-

ent.

n of

the

ould

I think, ladies and gentlemen, that you will agree that our Association has accomplished many things in our interests; what then is our duty to the Association? Our duty is to support its officers in all their undertakings. We are very often apt to forget the amount of unseen work which is done by them. At least I speak feelingly, as I happen to be aware of some of the prodigious tasks they have accomplished—not for their own personal gain, but for the well-being of each and every member. Furthermore, we should ever remember that their duties are honorary. We are prone to criticize, and our criticism, not infrequently, is of a destructive, rather than of a constructive, character.

It was my good fortune to attend a meeting of a Branch some little while ago. The speaker, who was not unknown in the literary world, gave a most charming and delightful address. My only regret was that, in my opinion, this meeting had not the attendance it should have had, and my sympathies were with its Hon. Secretary. Of course I may have hit on a bad night, but I am still convinced that more members could have made that extra effort without undue exertion. Not only in this instance, but whenever there is a meeting, professional etiquette calls for a slight sacrifice, to the speaker and to our colleagues in office.

May I, in passing, make a reference to our Hon. Secretary—Mr. Hilton Smith. It is more than a matter of congratulation to him that he has been chosen by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to attend the Montreal Conference, and to visit the libraries in Canada and the U.S.A. Rather would I suggest that, in general, it is an honour to the Library Association, and particularly to our Section. No! don't suggest he's lucky; be more charitable by voicing the truth "that it is a just reward for his labours." On your behalf, I extend to him, and our other colleagues chosen, our best wishes for a successful and profitable time.

In giving you a somewhat sketchy and scrappy history of the evolution of our Association, I have endeavoured not to be flippant, and my statements, I hope, have not a subtle or malicious intent. I believe that by amalgamation we have mutually consolidated and strengthened our position in the professional world of Library affairs. I do not for a minute suggest that the acme of perfection has been reached, but that state should be our ultimate purpose.

Any person who doubts the value of our Association, to my mind, shows a remarkable lack of vision. It is not what you get out of the Association that counts. That savours of selfishness. What you put in is the only thing that matters. We may not agree on matters of policy, but that is a minor detail for which remedial measures can be constitutionally proposed. I can only conclude with the fervent hope that the work begun, and brought to its present state by enthusiastic chiefs and assistants—both past and present—may be so unified that the professional status I mentioned earlier will no longer be mythical, but a tangible reality.

24800

A JUNIOR SPEAKS TO JUNIORS KATHLEEN E. PUGH

THERE are various matters which the members of our profession often, or perhaps continually, grumble about: the library rate, the salaries, the buildings, to name only a few. But while these things cannot be altered at once, because such matters do not rest entirely with librarians, there is something in our very midst which by our own efforts we can improve. That is the library staff. In fact, ourselves.

A new junior is absolutely raw material. Usually he comes straight from school; he is quick to form opinions, is very impressionable, and has a tendency to criticize, not necessarily in the hearing of other members of the staff. Is this material always used in the best way? It can seldom be, otherwise the profession would have produced more striking young members of late years. No new assistant is going to be filled with enthusiasm for library work unless he sees that the members of the staff regard their work as something more than a series of meaningless routine duties. Do you ever review yourselves as librarians? If you have never been through this mental process, please begin now. Sum up your library abilities, and compare them with those of that fictitious person, the perfect librarian. Having found the comparison unfavourable to yourselves, as of course it must be, consider why it is so. I think the main reason is that some people do not even aim at being ordinary librarians, and others, being ordinary, are content to remain so. There is a great need for library staffs to be more ambitious about their work. A struggle to reach the unattainable must surely lift them a little higher.

The personal aspect of library work is a most important one for junior

assistants. The prestige of the library does not rest entirely with chiefs and committees. The persons who create a good or bad impression on the minds of the public are the assistants who come into contact with readers. One ill-mannered or abrupt assistant may undo all the good work that is being done by the people higher up. The improvement of a staff does not necessarily mean improvement in its work. Every member of a staff may be hardworking and conscientious, and yet the public may fail to get an impression of cheerfulness and willingness.

a

at

at

ly

nt

so be

H

en,

es,

be

ns,

ve.

om

s a

the er-

of

ary

ne-

ess,

rith

m-

t is

eing

SO.

ork.

nior

The seniors of the staff usually come in for a fair amount of criticism—that is only natural—but juniors would do well to remember that the seniors were juniors once, that they have had some years of experience, and that they probably know what they are talking about. The ideal senior is the person we thoroughly respect, and for whom we work willingly; he listens to our suggestions tactfully, and bears our inexperience without impatience.

For many years, our seniors, and the librarians before them, have been trying to give librarianship a firm standing. The librarians of past years did not have our opportunities. They worked longer hours for less salary; they had fewer facilities for obtaining professional education, and they received very little encouragement. Yet they managed to establish Public Libraries on a firm basis, and continually to raise their status. Is librarianship to-day progressing at the pace of past years? If we are not careful we shall soon be in that blissful semi-conscious state of being satisfied with ourselves. So I appeal to the juniors, the seniors of future years, to begin preparing themselves for the task of helping in the progress of librarianship, not merely by achieving technical qualifications, but by co-operating, talking, and propagandizing.

"34 Ac"

THE THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING

NNUAL meetings are difficult things to report. A record of facts, compiled with the passionate insistence on votes of thanks so characteristic of our divisional representatives, is apt to sound like the description of a rather dull day punctuated by free meals, a description to be scanned cursorily by those who were present and skipped by those who were not. An annual meeting is necessarily a full-dress occasion, but one renders thanks that

in the A.A.L. the starch never crackles too noticeably. One talks, one looks, one listens. One renews old acquaintances and makes new ones. We librarians are a restless and wandering race, and pursue our careers in a ravelling skein of personal relations. But an impressionistic sketch is inevitably only one person's version, which may be good writing but damned bad reporting. So one balances precariously on two stools, conscious that one is badly supported by memory and the other by laziness.

For the London members, at least, the day was a full one, truncated at both ends by a railway journey the length of which perhaps made the party rather smaller than usual. A perfect day and a warm railway carriage are not the best of combinations, and looking out on sunlit fields, one was stricken with vague aspirations towards county librarianship. Derby was reached at one o'clock, and the Assembly Rooms, where lunch was waiting, at twenty past, a hiatus due to Derby being one of those towns which, having accepted a railway station under protest, has removed it as far as possible from its centre. The Mayor of Derby was at the Assembly Rooms to welcome us, but was unwontedly silent for a mayor, and most of us would have been unaware of his presence at all had not our President called our attention to the fact. Lunch quickly became a grateful memory (a menu composed by a cook with an appreciation of the passing of the seasons is a sufficient rarity in the provinces to deserve notice), and the party set off for a short tour of the vicinity of Derby by motor-coach. Here the writer, being almost a Derbyshire man himself, should break into a lyrical appreciation of the finest country in England, but unfortunately he suffers from a physical aversion to the char-àbanc which is apt to make him rather embarrassing company in one, so he contented himself with a tour of the vicinity of Derby on foot. This did not prevent him from being very superior on the subject of Derbyshire on the party's return, full of tributes to the beauty of the scenery they had passed through.

Tea followed, with a company much augmented by the addition of contingents from Birmingham and Sheffield, and the Mayor gave us his official welcome and personal blessing, adequately replied to by Mr. Patrick of Birmingham.

Then the decks were both metaphorically and physically cleared for action. The Business Meeting took its course in that atmosphere of peaceful calm which has become normal in recent years—a tribute perhaps to the ever-increasing unity of the Association on matters of policy. The Annual Report and 170

Financial Statements were adopted, and two small amendments to the rules carried. The result of the ballot for officers and council was declared, and the electorate were shown what they had voted for on the heartless insistence of the President. One only hopes that we did not all look as fatuous as I felt,

Then Miss Exley retired from the chair, and Mr. Hurford, the incoming President, took possession. The Presidential Address was in characteristic vein, and indulged in no flights of idealistic fancy, but was a sound, practical, and hard-headed summary of the history of the A.A.L. and its importance to the profession as a whole. After the Presidential Address, Mr. Cranshaw thanked the retiring President for her work, and expressed the opinion of the whole meeting when he said that she had set a standard surpassed by very few of our male Presidents. The meeting was closed by Mr. Cooper, with a vote of thanks to the Corporation of Derby for their hospitality, and to all those who had laboured behind the scenes to make the thirty-ninth annual meeting a memorable one.

And so to the train. The high-water mark of the return journey was undoubtedly achieved by Mr. Hilton Smith. If the speakers of the day had shed illumination, it is equally certain that Mr. Hilton Smith effectually removed it.

F. M. G.

~28.8cm

ON THE EDITOR'S DESK

d

S

at

ty

ot

en

at

ity

la

re.

vas

his

ach

an

ces

of

man

in r-à-

he

not

the

conficial

k of

tion.

vhich

easing

and

Manifesto: being the book of the Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals.

(Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

THE Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals was founded last year "to promote contact and co-operation between societies and individuals working towards social and economic reconstruction, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of their efforts." This book, *Manifesto*, is a discussion of portions of the basis of the Federation by various well-known writers.

It is difficult to review a motive, and it is with the motive behind this book rather than the book itself that I am primarily concerned. With many of the statements of the book I am in grave disagreement, and indeed, the preface explicitly admits the probability of readers not accepting the whole of the book. Some readers will be incensed at the extremity of Miss Janet Chance's

views on the reform of the sex laws. Others will discount entirely the chapters on politics and economics. And still others will be amused at Mr. Olaf Stapledon's envisaging of the issue of licences to parents for the right to bring up their own children.

But with the motive which has impelled, first, the formation of the F.P.S.I., and second, the publication of this book, every modern librarian must find himself in entire agreement. We librarians must realize that our work is a part of general progressive effort, that we can no longer continue, in the words of the recent report of the Carnegie Trust, "in isolation from other cultural efforts." To those who still believe in isolation, Mr. Joad's magnificent preface to Manifesto is commended—a call to unity which is a masterpiece of persuasiveness; with a sustained note of optimism most refreshing in these days of intellectual despair. Librarians to-day generally realize their potential social importance, but the steps that have been taken to make it a fact are so far few. It may be that associate membership of the F.P.S.I., declared helpmate of cultural societies like ours, will be considered as a possible step of the future.

The chapter in Manifesto most professionally interesting is the one on "Education and world citizenship," by Mr. Olaf Stapledon, and it is that chapter with which librarians are most likely to quarrel. Mr. Stapledon may remould the basis of formal education nearer his heart's desire, but he does not appear to realize that, while informal adult education is neglected, and adolescents leaving school, or even before they leave school, are subjected to the corrupting influence of commercialized leisure, formal education is ploughing the sand. Mr. Stapledon knows that education to-day is not realizing the hopes centred on it, none better, but in his attempt to make it do so he takes too long a stride. His essay rather discusses the form education will take in the ideal state than what steps should be taken to bring about the ideal state by education. The basis of the F.P.S.I., so far as it relates to education, is subject to the same criticism.

Two additions should be made to that basis. First, "The suppression of the commercial exploitation of leisure," and second, "The encouragement of informal adult education to prevent the growth of prejudice on controversial subjects." If those two points were added, one would feel more than one does at present that the F.P.S.I. was in touch with actual democracy and not an intellectual movement operating in a void.

F. M. G.

THE DIVISIONS

r

n

r

-

e

g

ir

a

on

at

ay

es

nd

ed

is

ot

do

ion

the

to

of

t of

sial

one

not

MIDLAND DIVISION

A JOINT Meeting of the Birmingham and District Branch of the Library Association and of the Association of Assistant Librarians, Midland Division, was held at Halesowen on Wednesday, 16th May, 1934.

The afternoon session was devoted to a Junior Meeting under the Chairmanship of Mr. C. Brown (Constitution Hill Library), and a thoughtful and well-reasoned paper on "The Relations of staff and borrowers" was given by Mr. G. J. Dolman (Acocks Green Library). In it, he urged the importance of the subject in that the public's estimate of the value and efficiency of a library was almost always the result of personal contact between staff and borrowers.

Members were next welcomed by County Alderman J. B. Downing, Chairman of the Halesowen Urban District Council, and Mr. Councillor W. Hodgetts, Chairman of the Public Libraries Committee, and afterwards entertained by them to tea.

At the Senior Meeting in the evening Mr. H. M. Cashmore took the Chair. Mr. C. M. Jackson proposed the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Woodbine:

"That in the opinion of the Meeting, Question 2 in the Third Paper of Part III of the Final Examination of May 1934 demands knowledge outside the scope of the Syllabus for Advanced Administration. The Meeting therefore ask the Library Association Education Committee to instruct Examiners to ignore this question when marking answers."

This resolution was carried.

Mr. C. G. Smith, Librarian, Halesowen, then gave an interesting paper entitled "Small libraries—their problems and possibilities." He said that little attempt had been made by the profession as a whole to face the problems which confronted backward library areas, a great number of which were to be found in places with populations of 40,000 and under. The service which such populations could afford was inadequate, and the systems were faced with the alternatives of either borrowing from a larger system or of surrendering their powers to the county. Using the book-borrowing figures of the Small municipal libraries manual, Mr. Smith showed the inadequacy of such a scheme in the case of an area of 10,000 population, while he saw in the surrender of powers to the county no prospects of better service. The local authority

had still to provide for the upkeep of the library, and in addition would, in effect, be paying its book money to the county for a service which it could have provided itself as an independent authority.

Mr. Smith's iconoclasm stretched to the Carnegie practice of bolstering up backward systems by money grants. In this he saw the possibility of strong reaction, and a return to torpidity as soon as the grants had expired.

He thought Government inspection of libraries necessary, particularly in the case of small libraries.

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION

On Wednesday, 8th April, the Division held a most successful meeting at Lewes. During the afternoon, visits were paid to the Castle, and to the Sussex Archæological Society's Museum at Barbican House. After tea, kindly provided by Mr. H. Wilson, M.C., East Sussex County Librarian, the meeting took the form of a "Magazine." Mr. W. Law, Chairman of the Division, presided. Fourteen contributions sent anonymously were read by various members of the audience, and were as follows:

"Unconsidered trifles," "Monster-ous," "A Thing of beauty is a joy for ever," "On uniforms," "Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?" "Song of the junior," "Modern novelist," "It's all in the day's work," "The Swan of Avon," "Books in the village," "Meetings," "Library in the Stone Age," "A Forgotten port," "Culture and twentieth century." A ballot was taken after the reading of the papers, and the highest number of votes was recorded for "Song of the junior," written by Miss K. Hills (Hove). Mr. W. Hynes, F.L.A., Chief Librarian, Eastbourne, proved to be the writer of the second most popular paper. Hearty votes of thanks to Mr. Wilson, the East Sussex County Library Staff, and the writers of the papers terminated the proceedings.

SOUTH-WESTERN DIVISION

A meeting of the South-western Division held at Portsmouth on Wednesday, 30th May, resulted in the largest attendance yet recorded. Members met at the Central Library, and were conveyed along the Southsea front to the city airport. Here they were able to examine many machines, and through the courtesy of Airspeed, Ltd., were able to see an aeroplane in almost every stage of construction. Returning to Portsmouth, they were entertained to tea by the City Librarian and Curator, Mr. James Hutt, M.A., F.L.A., who is also President of the Division this year. After tea Mr. Hutt gave an address 174

dealing with his personal reminiscences, particularly those at the Bodleian Library. This proved extremely interesting, not only from the point of view of the speaker's personal experiences, but also from the sidelights thrown on the then librarian of the Bodleian, Mr. Nicholson. The description of Mr. Hutt's progress, combined with the difficulties under which he was forced to work for his degree, made one realize that the present-day library assistant has much to be thankful for. After rapidly outlining his career at the Bodleian, the speaker went on to give sketches of some of the famous men with whom he came into contact. Amongst these were Professor Jowett, Canon Bright, Bishop Stubbs, Gladstone, Francis Jenkinson, Lord Balcarres, E. B. Taylor, the Stainer family, the Couch family, W. W. Skeat, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Dr. Murray, Edwin Arber, the Duchess of Albany, William Morris, Sir Richard Burton, and Gordon Duff. He was also present at several Commemorations, two of which were of outstanding interest. The first was in 1890, when H. M. Stanley took his Hon. Doctor's degree, and the other in 1899, when Cecil Rhodes and Lord Kitchener took their degrees, on which occasion our present King and Queen (as Duke and Duchess of York) were present. A cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Hutt for his hospitality and for his address was proposed by Mr. B. C. Short (Chief Librarian of Poole) and seconded by Mr. G. E. White (Eastleigh). Amongst others present were Mrs. Hutt, Miss K. R. Bennett (Chairman), Mr. F. W. C. Pepper (City Librarian, Winchester), Mr. L. H. Beach (Borough Librarian, Gosport), and Miss E. J. Carnell (Bognor Regis).

in ld

ng

of

in

ing

the

dly

ing

on,

ous

for

the

on,"

tten

ling

the

hief

ular

rary

Ines-

bers

o the

ough

every

ed to

ho is

dress

H. S.

YORKSHIRE DIVISION

Under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Finney, the Chief Librarian, the Yorkshire Division held a most successful meeting at York on Wednesday, 18th April, 1934.

Seventy-six members assembled at the Library, where they were welcomed by the Chief Librarian and his staff.

After a brief inspection of the Library the party spent the afternoon in visiting the Railway Museum and the Railway Signalling School.

Tea was kindly provided at the Mansion House, the residence of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor of York. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress received the party, and in his address of welcome the Lord Mayor paid fitting tribute to the value of Public Libraries and to the staff of the York Public Library.

At the evening session, Mr. H. W. Marr, Central Lending Librarian, Sheffield, delivered his Presidential Address, "Whither the A.A.L.?"

Mr. Marr briefly recapitulated the events which led to amalgamation of the A.A.L. and the L.A. Although a firm believer in the principle of amalgamation, he doubted whether the L.A., at the time of amalgamation or ever as it exists to-day, was the ideal association to represent all library workers in the country. He then briefly referred to the discussions for securing closer unity between the parent association and the section, and said it was not improbable that the demise of the A.A.L. foreshadowed in the original scheme of amalgamation was now at hand.

The proceedings terminated with cordial votes of thanks to the President of the Division, to the Library Committee, and to the Chief Librarian and his staff.

"31, A."

NEW MEMBERS

ENTRAL.—C. F. Aller (Mitcham); E. R. Bodley (Poplar); B. Bennett, Irene Pooley, Constance Relph, Eric T. Shepherd, Joan E. R. Walden (Hornsey); S. H. Bridge (Southend); Miss N. J. Bullar (Friern Barnet); Neville E. Dain (Watford); Gladys Edwards (Westonsuper-Mare); Margaret E. Ellis (Hammersmith); S. Gawley (Southwark); Dorothea Hayward (Victoria and Albert Museum); Ronald J. Lee (Reading); Margaret O. McDougall (Inverness); Miss J. H. Palmer, Miss A. Smith (Surbiton); Elsie M. Pettifer (Old Monoux School, Walthamstow); M. W. Seppings (Council School, Bowes Road, S.E.I); George E. Thompson, M. Elizabeth Urch (Bristol); Joan Tracey (72 Oakley Street, Chelsea, S.W.3); Edith M. Webber (Dundee).

Midland Division.—E. Aldington (Warwick County); D. F. Bellamy, Phyllis Sayers, J. P. Tonks (Birmingham); Miss R. M. Fde (Stoke-on-Trent); Miss K. E. Fell (Rugby); Miss F. M. Green (Glossop); F. Higgenbottom (Burton-on-Trent); R. Irwin (Northants County); Miss E. Lenthall (Derby County); K. D. Miller (Hanley); Miss M. V. Morgan (Gloucester County); L. C. Neal (Leicester); Miss E. Rigby (Stoke); W. H. Snape, Miss L. A. Walsh (Leicester County); Miss C. E. Stevenson (Stafford); Miss M. E. L. Thompson (Coventry); Miss L. E. Thornton (Derby); Miss E. A. Townsend (Cheltenham).

North-Western Division.—Leonard Alston, T. D. Pearce, W. A. Turner (Bolton); Miss M. R. Apsimon, Miss E. M. Edwards, Miss C. B. McGivern (Mayer Library, Bebington); S. Barton (Flint County, Mold); Margaretta Miles (Waterloo); Harold G. Mills (St. Helens).

South-Eastern Division.—Miss G. M. Powell, S. L. Scutt (W. Sussex County).

South Wales Division.—Miss G. E. Owen (Aberystwyth).

South-Western Division.—Joseph B. Archer, Albert G. Barrett, William R. Dymott, Eileen B. Higgins, Beatrice L. Mouland, D. E. O. Newton, Ernest L. Philippe, Marjorie E. Russell (Southampton); Bernard C. Short (Poole).

Yorkshire Division.—G. W. Batty, A. Taylor (Sheffield); F. J. Boardman (Rotherham); H. H. Brook, D. Taylor (Halifax); Miss M. I. R. Buchan, Alice K. Megow (W. Riding County); Ruth Dobson (Leeds); Miss C. Edwards (W. Riding County, Wakefield); Miss E. Oates (York); R. C. Sayell (Wakefield); Miss F. Shepherd (Bradford); F. A. Tagg, Miss L. Vickers (Chesterfield); Miss M. H. Webster (Bradford Library and Literary Society).

Resignations.—Miss F. M. Cornock, Miss A. N. Leach (Derby Public Library); Miss D. L. Pitt (Birmingham).

"SAR"

CORRESPONDENCE

CENTRAL LIBRARY,
OAKFIELD ROAD,

To the Editor, The Library Assistant. ILFORD.
6th June, 1934.

DEAR SIR,-

ian,

of

lgaever

kers

oser

not

eme

dent

and

; B.

Joan V. J.

stonark);

ing); Smith

. W.

pson,

elsea,

lamy,

rent);

ottom

cester

Snape,

ford);

Miss

As one of the "old bloods," having contributed to the Assistant since January 1933, and who is ever and anon considering a graceful retirement from professional journalism, I should like to make one or two comments on the letter from Mr. Adams, of Croydon, who is presumably one of the "young bloods," in the June Assistant.

The value of the various articles which are the subject of his criticism is, of course, a matter of opinion and, as the author of one of them, I refrain from expressing mine, particularly as this matter has been dealt with in "Pronouncements" in the same issue. I do, however, very strongly object to his ill-

mannered comment on Miss Trevelyan's charming appreciation of Stella Benson. I have not the pleasure of knowing Miss Trevelyan; she is, I think, at least as far as the Assistant is concerned, one of those new writers whom Mr. Adams is so anxious to see in print. To say, as he does, that her contribution "befitted a woman's magazine of the more vulgar variety" is not merely exhibiting a deplorable ignorance of periodical literature and of Stella Benson and her public, but it definitely transgresses that conception of good taste which most of us consider fundamental to the civilized life. In any case, one would assume that a knowledge of the work of Stella Benson would help those "library assistants," including presumably Mr. Adams, "who, after all, are dealing with books, books, and still more books."

Yours faithfully, WILLIAM A. MUNFORD.

NORBURY LIBRARY, BEATRICE AVENUE, LONDON ROAD, S.W.16. 6th June, 1934.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT. DEAR SIR,-

TO THE EDITOR,

I hold no particular brief for the policy of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, but I feel moved to protest against some of the assertions made in the letter from Mr. Adams, who happens to be a member of the same staff as myself.

About eighteen months ago I was urged by one of your regular contributors to write for the Assistant. I replied that I did not approve of its policy: the same old names kept appearing; there was a distinct tendency to maintain an extreme "highbrowism" which was far from being the same thing as a good level of culture; and the writers were too verbose. The verbosity is still occasionally troublesome (I suggest that some contributors would profit by a reading of Quiller-Couch's On the art of writing or Pocock's Pen and ink), but in other directions a marked improvement, rather than a depreciation, is evident.

Mr. Adams has considerably weakened his position by the list of articles which he has cited as of no interest to the average assistant. With the exception of the Stella Benson appreciation, on which I will reserve judgment, not being accustomed to the type of periodical which he suggested it befitted, they seem to be most relevant to our interests—far more so, in fact, than the

vague arguments on literary ethics which you sometimes publish, and which are, I suspect, what Mr. Adams would write if he had the time. We certainly need book-reviews and literary essays as much as articles on technique, but the personal element should be subordinated as much as possible. Moreover, there is no point in attempting to compete with periodicals like The London mercury, which, one imagines, most assistants read.

> I remain, sir, Yours truly, SIDNEY W. ANDERSON.

PUBLIC LIBRARY, CHESTERFIELD. 5th June, 1934.

To THE EDITOR, THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,-

n

e

le

se

re

NT.

ter

OTS

cy:

tain

ood

still

oy a but , is

icles сер-

not

ted,

the

Public memory is notoriously short, and even popular books are forgotten after a lapse of time. Months have elapsed since the publication of English journey, with its laudatory press notices, but our " modestly competent " Bookshelf, to quote Mr. Callander, is still in circulation. It serves the necessary purpose of reminding readers that our library possesses this book, a fact which obviously press notices ignore. Another reason for giving publicity to popular but important books is that it is just as essential for these to be read months after their publication as it is at the time when critics are bringing them to the public eye. "Glimpses of the obvious" are necessary in a library bulletin.

> Yours faithfully, L. C. JACKSON, Librarian.

LIBRARY BOOK

Public Libraries and County Libraries Supplied Promptly with New Books and Remainders

CARLTON STREET, LOWER REGENT STREET, LONDON Telephone and Telegraphic Address : WHITEHALL 6335 LONDON



W. H. SMITH & SON LIBRARY SALES DEPARTMENT

YOU are invited to visit our Showroom at Strand House, and inspect our wide selection of recent Travel, Biography, Miscellaneous Literature, and Fiction.

W. H. SMITH & SON

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT, Strand House, Portugal St., London, W.C.2 Library Showroom (Entrance "B")

Telephone No. Holborn 4343

Head Office: W. H. Smith & Son, Ltd., Strand House, W.C.2



Apply:

THE HON. EDITOR

KENSAL RISE LIBRARY LONDON, N.W.10

G. BLUNT & SONS, LTD.



For the latest developments in LIBRARY REBINDING by the "Ideal" Guarded Every Leaf Process

THE FACSIMILE PUBLISHERS' BINDING

which is now so famous—over 1,600 bindings in stock—at 1/11 per volume, Cr. 8vo.

Lists of these bindings are issued and sent to all Libraries

Our book department also issues lists of books bound in this and other attractive styles at "Economy" prices

Visits from Public Librarians and Assistants welcomed to our works and showrooms

NORTH ACTON ROAD, HARLESDEN, LONDON, N.W.10